United Nations A/ES-10/687–S/2015/616

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
12 August 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to draw your urgent attention to the precarious situation in the Occupied State of Palestine owing to the illegal actions, provocations and incitement by Israel, the occupying Power, in particular acts of terror against the Palestinian people and their properties, by Israeli terrorist settlers in violation of international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law, with total impunity. The most recent incident was a vicious terrorist attack against the Dawabsha family, which took place in the village of Duma, near Nablus, on 31 July. In this horrific incident, a group of Israeli terrorist settlers set the Dawabsha family home on fire, resulting in the murder of Ali Saad Dawabsha, an 18-month old infant, who was burned to death. This malicious terror act also killed Ali's father, Saad Dawabsha, 32 years of age, who sustained burns over 80 per cent of his body, and, sadly, succumbed to his injuries on 8 August. Ali's mother, Riham, 30 years of age, and brother, Ahmad, four years of age, continue to struggle for their lives as a result of third-degree burns covering most of their bodies, which were sustained from this terrorist arson act.

The Palestinian leadership strongly condemns settler attacks against Palestinian civilians and their properties and holds the Israeli Government responsible for this terror, incitement, and provocation. We reiterate what President Abbas said in his statement before the meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers, affirming that "If the Israeli government does not take steps to catch the perpetrators of the crime against the Dawabsha family, it will be a partner of these crimes." Despite international condemnation and calls to hold accountable the perpetrators of this heinous crime, the Israeli Government has systematically failed to redress the grievances and to hold the responsible Israeli terrorist settlers accountable for this attack. On the contrary, the occupying Power continues, by word and deed, to deliberately maintain and incite a culture of terrorism and apartheid against Palestinian civilians and their properties, resulting in undeterred settler violence and

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the continued killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians, including women and children.

On 8 August, extremist Israeli settlers hurled firebombs at a Palestinian home, perpetuating yet another terror attack. The home belongs to Mahmoud Fazza Al-Kaabna in the village of Duma, the same village as the Dawabsha family home. The firebombs landed on the outer wall of the home near a window. In another incident, on 4 August, four Israeli terrorist settlers in a car attempted to kidnap Ahmad Nader Qaqour, 8 years of age, from the town of Hizma, north of Jerusalem. Ahmad's father, Nader Qaqour, who saved his son, said "When the settlers drove near Ahmad, I rushed towards him and asked him to back off." Following the exchange, Nader explained that the car then turned and headed to a nearby illegal Israeli settlement. Furthermore, on 2 August, Israeli settlers set fire to hundreds of acres of land surrounding the village of Burin, in southern Nablus. In a separate incident on the same day, Israeli settlers set fire to another area to the south of Burin, where the blaze rapidly spread to the southern village of Einabus. Since the beginning of 2015, records indicate that Israeli extremist settlers have carried out at least 120 attacks against Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and that there have been over 11,000 attacks since 2004. Such attacks by settlers against Palestinian civilians continue with total impunity and without redress, as is evident from the fact that over 85 per cent of incidents of settler violence, where an investigation actually develops, are closed without indictments.

In this connection, we must also reiterate that we cannot separate Israeli settler violence from Israel's illegal settlements, which are vastly spread across the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of international humanitarian law, as well as international criminal law, as articulated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and in contempt of the will of the international community, and in blatant rejection of the two-State solution, which is severely destroying the Palestinian Territory's contiguity and entrenching Israel's colonization and occupation of Palestinian land, with total impunity.

In addition to the wave of Israeli terrorism emanating from Israel's illegal settlements by their settler population, the Palestinian people continue to face the deliberate and systematic killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians, including children, a direct manifestation of Israel's illegal occupation, which further raises tensions throughout Occupied Palestine. On 10 August, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed Anas Muntaser Taha, 20 years of age, southwest of Ramallah. On 31 July, Israeli occupying forces killed Laith Al-Khaldi, 17 years of age, near Ramallah. Laith was shot in the chest and underwent two surgeries before succumbing to his injuries. Israeli occupying forces also shot to death Hamid Al-Masri, 17 years of age, near Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza. In a separate incident on 8 August, Israeli occupying forces injured Mahir Shatat, 14 years of age. Mahir was shot in the cheek by live fire. Since the beginning of 2015, Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 23 and injured at least 1,201 Palestinians in the Occupied State of Palestine. Israel, the occupying Power, continues to carry on with its abuses and violations against the Palestinian people, including children, defying international and human rights law and in spite of warnings from the international community, including the recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

Furthermore, I must raise awareness to a recent Israeli law, passed on 30 July, that directly affects the rights and dignity of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli occupation prisons. The law permits the force feeding of Palestinians on hunger strike in peaceful protest of their detention and occupation prison conditions. It is well known that this forcible act directly violates international law and international norms and is another form of torture and coercion. To this end, we call on Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately repeal this law, which violates the human rights of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. We demand that the occupying Power put an end to the arrest of Palestinian civilians and their abuse and torture in captivity, and call for the release of all Palestinians who have been imprisoned and detained and call for respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

We therefore reiterate our call for international protection for the Palestinian people. International humanitarian law and the commitments undertaken for the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, including children and women, must be upheld as a matter of urgency in the State of Palestine, where civilian lives are under constant threat by the occupying Power, which has not only grossly abrogated its obligations but also clearly relinquished them.

We again call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to act immediately to end Israel's impunity and resolve this conflict, which clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The Israeli occupation must end, and the Palestinian people must realize justice and their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom. The Palestinian leadership will continue to use all legitimate, peaceful means to achieve those goals. The Security Council thus cannot continue to be absolved of its responsibilities and must act urgently to avert further destabilization of this situation, with its far-reaching consequences for regional and international security and stability and the prospects to realize a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

This letter is in follow-up to our 549 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 31 July 2015 (A/ES-10/686-S/2015/589), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people, by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations